



Dear Kel,

For the last three years, I've spent several days post-Christmas and pre-Epiphany ringing in the new year silently on retreat. Dwelling in an old, Jesuit novitiate, I needn't leave home to do so, saturated as my walls are with decades of prayer and quiet. Although unable to tell you what exactly happens to me during these periods of solitude, I can't doubt their benefits.



*Greg Kennedy with Miriam Koopman,
IJC's Communication Coordinator*

Far from being a private indulgence, personal retreats are communal investments. They clarify what we live for and how we want to share our life. The history of retreats, at least in the West, shows their connection to community. In its first three centuries, Christianity existed as an alternative movement to the oppressive excesses of the dominant Roman culture. When Emperor Constantine made Christianity the imperial religion, it quickly lost its radical edge. Those concerned with this loss took to the desert to preserve the freedom, compassion, egalitarianism and hope embodied by Jesus. Out of this withdrawing from harmful influences eventually emerged monasticism and retreats.

Today, retreats retain this crucial distance from the prevailing culture, provided, of course, they wrest themselves from cultural cooption. In certain circles, "corporate retreat" is not an oxymoron. Companies put them on to increase productivity and profit. But in a personal retreat you might ask whether profit and productivity are your ultimate ends. In the silence you can listen to deeper callings and dare to question the stories about you told to you by the often merciless expectations of unforgiving, consumer culture.

Retreats slow us down, open us up, and connect us inward and outward. These loving activities directly oppose the busyness, aggression and isolation painfully prevalent around us. To this extent, personal retreats help the healing not only of individuals, but of communities composed of individuals healing. When so much of our society instills anxiety, ingratitude and competition, "retreating" can be seen as a profound act of civil disobedience.

The Ignatius Jesuit Centre now has nearly all its many and varied retreats up on its website ready for registrations. Please consider attending one or many for your own good and the good of all others.

Blessings,
Greg Kennedy
Executive Director

[DONATE ONLINE NOW](#)

Loyola House - Retreats & Ignatian Training



Do check all our retreats & training programs for 2025 with lots of new opportunities!

Find out more here:
[retreats & training.](#)

Looking to go on retreat? Check these out:

One-Day Retreats -

- **Called by Name** - January 31 *
- **Let Us Dream: The Path to a Better Future** - February 7 *
- **NEW! Film & Spirituality** - February 12
- **NEW! Introduction to Discernment** - March 3
- **NEW! Journey to Emmaus: To be a Pilgrim** - March 14

**will be on the website soon!*

Multi-Day Retreats -

- **NEW! Praying with Hope Weekend Retreat** - January 31-February 2
- **Contemplative Activism Retreat** - January 31-February 2
- **Directed Prayer Weekend** - February 7-9
- **Finding Your Way: Weekend of Discernment** - February 7-9
- **NEW! Pope Francis & the Way of the Heart Weekend Retreat** - March 6-9
- **Knowing the Heart of Jesus** - March 14-16
- **NEW! Journeying with Grief** - March 18-20

[Apply for a retreat today!](#)

Training Opportunities -

- **NEW! Spiritual Direction & the Enneagram** - February 6
- **NEW! Seeds of Rest & Renewal - A Retreat for Spiritual Directors** - March 11-13

[Apply today!](#)

It is in solitude
that we discover
that being is more important than having
and that we are worth more
than the results of our efforts.

In solitude
we discover that our life
is not a possession to be defended
but a gift to be shared.

- Henri Nouwen



Ignatius Farm, Land & Old-Growth Forest Project Community

AT THE FARM



Winter pic of the sun setting behind the big barn



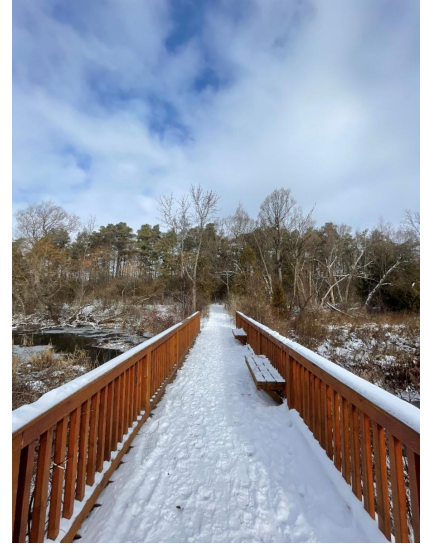
Dreaming of this year's garden plot!

Now's the time to register for your community garden or garlic plot for 2025! Take the winter months to plan the layout of your garden plot. It won't be long until you can get your hands in the soil!
[Register online here.](#)

Happy planning!

Interested in keeping up-to-date on the Farm's activities? [Sign up for the monthly Farm E-News here.](#)

ON THE LAND



The land department staff transition to snow removal during the winter, ensuring friends and visitors of IJC can access our land and trails safely throughout the snowy months. We are blessed to have the opportunity to witness the early morning sunrises and winter wonderland sights that take place throughout the winter here at IJC.

You too can experience these sights by visiting our trails which remain open throughout the winter months for hiking, snowshoeing and skiing. IJC is also home to the Guelph Nordic Ski Club Trailhead, meaning there are memberships available to access exclusive club updates and over 8 km of groomed ski trails. Visit the Guelph Nordic Ski Club Facebook page to learn more. You can also find the newest version of our trail map on the [IJC website here](#).

UPCOMING OPPORTUNITIES & EVENTS - ENRICH YOUR LIFE!

Join Our Staff

The Ignatius Jesuit Centre is looking for a new **Development & Communications Coordinator**. You will work closely with staff and volunteers to create communications and development strategies that incorporate the unique aspects of Loyola House, Ignatius Farm, and the Old-Growth Forest. This is a creative position for people who love the challenge of considering different audiences, partners, and community members to weave together a cohesive message and build relationships.

[Click here](#) for more information about this position.

We are also looking for seasonal staff to join us in 2025. [Click here](#) to see what opportunities are available. Check back regularly for the latest updates.



Cedar Circle Sunday Afternoons

Sunday January 19 2:30-4pm
St. Brigid's Villa

Radmilo Anicic, explorer, lover of land and storyteller, will take us on the journey to the far north of Canada and into the depths of ourselves. Get in touch with the beauty of winter.

For more info: [Cedar Circle Sunday Afternoons - Ignatius Jesuit Centre](#)

CEDAR CIRCLE
SUNDAY AFTERNOONS

AT IGNATIUS JESUIT CENTRE



CONTEMPLATIVE GATHERINGS
TO LISTEN TO YOUR SOUL
AND THE SOUL OF THE LAND.

LAND LOVERS

This is the seventh “Land Lovers” profile, compiled by local Guelph artist, writer and Ignatius land lover, Dawn Matheson. Reach out to us if you are a lover of our fields and forests, flora and fauna and want to share in the wonder. We’d like to profile you.

Meet Kobe, the eldest in a family of five who find ways to love the land in all seasons: gardening in summer and cross-country skiing in winter. Kobe has been skiing the groomed trails at Ignatius since he was 8, and occasionally instructs now, too. If you are keen to ski (let it snow!) connect with the Guelph Nordic Ski Club on [Facebook](#) / guelph-nordic@hotmail.com, or donate onsite at the trailhead (see [map](#)) via the QR code.



Who are you? What do you want us to know about you?

My parents are from Belgium, I was born in the USA, but I’ve lived most of my life in Guelph. I just turned 20 and am in my first year of college, so I spend most of my time buried in books – except when I’m climbing, running or cross-country skiing.

How do you spend your time out on the land?

For my whole life our family has come up to Ignatius – in the summer, too, to pick up our community vegetable share – that was before we started our own garden plot a few years ago. As soon as the snow falls, our family skies the trails and have been members of the Guelph Nordic for years.



Why do you come? What does this land offer you?

The land of Ignatius offers me a lot of open space to explore the outdoors while doing something I really like. I love looking over the white vastness of the fields while waiting for my brothers to catch up (ha!). Though there are a lot of trails, you can't get lost. The land gives me a lot of freedom to roam on my own, even when I was younger.

How do you give back to the land?

By being part of community gardening we support the local species of animals and bugs as they keep stealing our vegetables that we don't pick in time!

By skiing with the xc club, I hope I inspire more kids to go out and enjoy the beautiful lands that Ignatius has to offer.

POETRY

Retreat(ment)

by gregor Y kennedy

the silent (re)treatment really works
when you're lonely, happy, mad or sad
go away

into the desert
modified, modernized, metaphorical
with good food
where soul and body get together
to talk about being human
it's not a spa
electroshock
or chemotherapy
but it's a (re)treatment nonetheless
for health and beauty
for health and beauty
in untold varieties
are what you're really built for



Visit our
Website



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